Philosophy 4
Intro to Philosophy
Spring 2006
Cabrillo College
Instructor: Zachary Fruhling
Midterm Exam

Part I: Short Essays
Directions: Answer ***ten and only ten*** of the following fifteen questions. Answers will be graded on the depth and breadth of your demonstrated understanding of the course material thus far. Bear in mind, though, that the exam is to be completed within three hours; so your time on each question should be spent accordingly. If you answer more than ten questions I will only read the first ten that you answer. Neatness counts! If I cannot read your answer, it will be as though you had not written it.

1. Summarize the views of *three* different pre-Socratic philosophers on the fundamental nature of reality. Be able to compare and contrast these three views, to explain what aspects of reality each view attempts to capture, and to explain the various points for and against each “theory”.

2. What are the three arguments given by Socrates in Plato's dialog "The Crito" for obligation to obey the law. What are the potential objections to these arguments?

3. Summarize Plato's Allegory of the Cave. How is the cave allegory a metaphor for reality? For knowledge? For education? For politics? For Socrates' own life? For philosophy? How does the Cave Allegory relate to Plato’s doctrine of the “Forms”? Finally, what are some challenges to the forms doctrine offered by Aristotle?

4. What is a "foundationalist" theory of knowledge? How is Descartes a foundationalist? What is the specific "foundation" of Descartes' epistemological and metaphysical system? How is a "coherence" theory of knowledge a critique of foundationalism?

5. What are Descartes' two arguments for mind-body dualism. Be able to discuss the reasoning behind each argument as well as the theoretical motivation for offering arguments for dualism. What are some potential objections to each argument?

6. What is the structure of Descartes' overall argument in his Meditations? Be able to summarize his overall argument step-by-

step. Why is his overall argument often taken to be circular?

7. What is the Problem of Evil? What are four potential solutions that have been offered to the Problem of Evil? What are the challenges that face each of these proposed solutions?

8. How do Descartes and Hume differ on the origin of our ideas? Use specific examples.

9. Explain in detail David Hume's critique of scientific knowledge. What is his view on causation as necessary connexion? How does he end up as a skeptic?

10. Discuss the differences between Descartes', Spinoza's, and Leibniz's theories of substance.

11. Distinguish between a deistic, a pantheistic, and a panentheistic model of the God/world relation. How do the concepts of transcendence and immanence apply to each of these? What are the theoretical motivations or reasons for preferring each of these different views?

12. Distinguish in detail between each of the following general types of arguments for God's existence: cosmological arguments, ontological arguments, design arguments, and Pascal's Wager. What do these argument types have in common? How do they differ? What are some potential weaknesses or objections for each argument type?

13. Explain the following two Kantian principles in detail: A) Concepts without percepts are empty; percepts without concepts are blind. B) Objectivity equals universal intersubjectivity.

14. How does Kant provide a synthesis of both rationalism and empiricism? What is the structure of his overall epistemological system? Use terms such as "things-in-themselves," "the categories of the understanding," "the world of experience," "noumenal," "phenomenal," etc. How is he a transition between modern philosophy and postmodern philosophy? How does Kant's system purport to offer an answer to the skepticism of David Hume regarding objective scientific knowledge?

15. What is Kant's distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal self? How does this distinction provide the basis for his ethical theory? How does this distinctiopn relate to the “Categorical Imperative”?